What a Soldire Learned
(Soldier)
When he Was Blind

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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circumstances may decide. Some day may learn first-hand from the Germans at it feels like to be submerged in the ter when these devastating explosions ur one after another around a sub- rine. The crew must realize that at moment the frail hull of the submarine y be pierced; in that case death under most agonizing circumstances is their e.

ON-CATHOLIC AMERICAN SOLDIER LEEPS IN CONSECRATED GROUND

T could not have happened anywhere except in France, this heart-catching le incident of the solution found by an French *curé* for the problem of burying non-Catholic American soldier. The ole village had loved the *Américain*, the ole village wished to do him honor, but was not of the true faith, so how could be buried in consecrated ground?

French chivalry struggled with French eration for old religious customs, and outcome is as pure and delicate a little ll as ever got into a French story- ler's masterpiece. The Chicago *Tribune* ries the following report of it:

A very sick young American soldier left a ck-train in a little village in the Vosges, nking he would be all right in a couple of ys. He was the first Yank with whom villagers had come in close contact, and erybody laid themselves out to minister him.

The village *curé*, a kindly soul, took a p interest in the boy. The priest's ole human life was embraced in the rase, "*Pour la France.*" So, for the sick ughboy he brought knickknacks and eetmeats. The Yank could not talk ench and the *curé* could not talk English, t they managed to make each other un- rstood admirably.

The boy continued to grow worse, and e morning he died as the *curé* was holding hands. The villagers brought great eaths of wild flowers which filled the tle room of the *curé's* hillside home. e mourning for the unknown American med to touch each of the little homes.

Then perhaps the biggest dogmatic oblem of the gentle priest's life stared m in the face. Where could he dig the ave? The boy was not a Catholic, and one ever had been buried in the village metery who was not a Catholic.

The cemetery ran along the priest's rden, separated by a thin stone wall. he villagers were wondering, too, where e grave could be made when they beheld e *curé* spading up the earth in his garden close to the little stone wall as he could t. The boy had died "*Pour la France,*" d should be put as near the holy ground the venerable man could do it.

On the day of the funeral the villagers thered in the garden, and with wet ces consecrated, as best they could, the sting-place of the non-Catholic. One eat wreath of wild flowers covering the ave had worked in it in purple blooms e words "*Pour la France.*"

A rude wooden cross was erected. The *ré* was still troubled because the boy as not in holy ground, but he told the illagers he had done his best. Then the illagers a few mornings after that saw a rge hole in the priest's garden-wall, right eside the grave of the American soldier.

Some surmised that the priest himself ad torn down the wall during the night. Anyway, no wall now stands between the grave of the doughboy and the holy ground, and the grave always is covered with wild flowers and the little beadwork designs so common to French Catholic cemeteries.

It is further surmised that if the *curé* does mend his garden-wall, it will have a jog in it running out into the garden and around the mound of earth on which always are kept fresh blooms which spell the words "*Pour la France.*"

WHAT A SOLDIER LEARNED WHEN HE WAS BLIND

BLINDNESS, black night, shut out from a beautiful world, surely that is a heart-breaking, hopeless condition? Not a bit of it, said a sturdy young Anzac. Sightless, he still felt he could aid his country, and with the wonderful spirit which reigns in that far-off land of exquisite beauty he was a gallant soldier in our fight for freedom. His story is one of hope, faith, and grit. This is it as told in *The New Success:*

This is the message of Signaler Tom Skeyhill, the young Australian soldier-poet who was wounded in Gallipoli in 1916, when his company made a brilliant charge against the Turks. As a result of shell-shock Skeyhill became totally blind. No hope was held out by the world's most famous eye specialist in Europe that he would ever regain his eyesight. Gradually he regained his health and strength, but day was everlasting night to him.

But this young Anzac was not made of the stuff that admits defeat. Sightless, he could still see that his country needed him, and his country meant the allied forces of the world fighting for democracy, for right, freedom, and justice.

Truly there is no black night for the soldier who has the spirit-lamp of a great resolution to light him on his way!

Somewhere in the ranks Tom Skeyhill knew he still could help, and he found that place. The flaming sword of his spirit could still lead hosts against Germany, and he could still signal victory, tho he might not see the flag he so proudly leapt to serve when his country entered the war against the Hun in 1914.

The lecture platform would be his post henceforth if the battle-field were denied him. Accordingly, Tom Skeyhill has told his simple and eloquent story whenever and wherever there was an audience to listen. "Germany must be beaten" was the message he set forth to spread. And those who heard the blind soldier were thrilled and inspired and made to feel as he felt, that one pair of perfectly good and desirable eyes were little enough to give for one's country.

Then—it was in May, 1918—he regained his eyesight in Washington! It came about almost as simply as one of the miracles in the Bible. He had been told that everything known to medical science had been done for his eyes. Maybe so, but when he heard of a doctor who hoped he could help him, Skeyhill agreeably submitted to another experiment. There might be something in it, and he needed his eyes.

Skeyhill went to the Garfield Hospital, still sightless, and lo, the miracle! He came out a few hours later, seeing!

Visualize a young crusader, a knight of the Holy Grail, and you have some idea of the spirituality of this soldier's face. He is all Englishman in his blond coloring, in his bonny, blue eyes, but all colonial, thoroughly Australian in his lean, steel-like muscles and fleshless sinew.

But it is best to let the young fellow tell his own story. Meanwhile be it remarked that a man who can learn that folks are neighborly when he is blind, and can talk about the white hospital-wall, the first thing he saw when sight came back, as a subject for an epic poem, is the sort of man worth reading about, carefully. Now for the yarn:

"The battle in which I was blinded was fought on the Gallipoli peninsula, December 8, 1916. We were charging up a steep declivity when there was an awful, world-rocking explosion, and I, among others, staggered back and fell to the ground. I was unconscious for some time, but at last came a sense of returning consciousness, which was followed by the dread realization that tho still alive I was blind.

"Some philosopher has said 'happiness is the cessation of unhappiness.' There is a great deal of truth in this, one who has gone through the mill feels. It takes blindness or some such tragedy as the loss of communication with the good old world around and about us to make us realize the every-day blessedness of life and limb and sight.

"When I lost my sight I came to have a new realization of the neighborliness of people. I never realized the great throbbing heart of the world until I stood in the night waiting for a friendly hand to guide me. And that friendly hand was never lacking.

"Then came my hospital experience. At first I could see only pin-pricks of light," he begins, "but those flashes were like a wireless message of hope on a battle-field. A message that help is on the way to the rescue."

Signaler Skeyhill knows how to put things in terms of battle, for he has sent and received those messages that give back life and hope to hold on, to endure even the unendurable if rescue is in sight.

"Then waves of gratitude seemed to engulf me," he continues. "To have my sight again was happiness greater than I felt I could bear. Joy doesn't kill. I can testify to that. For my heart beat on steadily even while the light grew clearer about me.

"Barrie once declared that no one should try to write who couldn't write an interesting story about a hole in a wall. Well, I want to say that a bare white hospital-wall will always stand out in my memory as the most beautiful object in the world. For that wall was the first thing I saw when my sight was restored. 'An interesting story.' Why that wall is worthy of an epic poem!

"My one ambition now is to complete my lecture arrangements and get back into action, where every able-bodied man should be. There is a battle-line in France that needs strengthening, and it is there I want to be, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the gallant American lads, the brave French, the indomitable British, the fine Italians, and the men of Canada and Australia whose dash and daring have won the admiration of the world and the bitter hatred of the Huns, who haven't got the physical or moral courage to face us, man to man, in the open field.

"When I became certain that the return of my sight was not a cruel dream, and that henceforth I should be able to look upon the faces of my friends and view the

half-oriental. Oriental fatalism is in him. To-morrow or next day—who knows?—the Germans will be here to rescue us from "Freedom"! The *Intelligentsia* have developed an inordinate respect for the German.

"And meanwhile we are not going to continue fighting for British capitalism." A phrase I heard half a dozen times a day at least! While our dreamers sympathize with them they speak thus of us.

For the rest I ask: What have the *Intelligentsia* class in Russia done to prevent their country from being sold body and soul to Germany? Nothing!

During five months of Bolshevism I have watched the *Intelligentsia* swallow everything that Lenine, Trotzky, and company have cared to give them.

Their safe-deposits at the bank have been confiscated; many are without money, or means of earning any. Yet with typical Russian apathy they just wait. To-morrow! Perhaps. Or perhaps another day.

So it goes on, and our munitions, our guns, our money, our effort, are annihilated—or pass, where portable, to Germany.

Heavy British guns were sold to Germany for 200 rubles each. One Russian division sold their artillery to the Germans for 30,000 rubles and were well pleased. Our own guns are now hammering our men on the West.

THREE-THOUSAND-SIX-HUNDRED-FOOT FALL MADE HIS NOSE BLEED

THE little black pigs in the field below were badly frightened, and so were the mules, but the chap who was rushing earthward from the sky at express-train speed was more amused at their comical scurrying about than alarmed at his own prospective collision with the farm. When he started downward he took to his parachute, but found it wasn't working that day, so he calmly clambered back into the basket and awaited events. He wasn't kept waiting very long, either. It was John Pflieger, the nineteen-year-old son of Mr. Paul Pflieger, cotton merchant of New York, training in the Balloon School at Arcadia, Cal., who had this experience. He dropt 3,600 feet, and, altho a trifle jarred and sore, virtually escaped without a scratch. Writing to his parents from the hospital, he gives a cheerful account of this great fall. *Commerce and Finance* publishes the letter from which we make the following extracts:

I was up 3,600 feet, and had just reported that the manometer tube was out of order, so I was a little afraid something might happen and had tested my hand-valve, when suddenly I heard a crackling noise. I looked up; the rip panel had bursted open and the basket was swinging wildly like a kite without a tail. I knew that under such circumstances it was all right to jump. I heard the phone ring, probably to warn me of the danger, then heard the cable break. I thought that both the telephone-wire and the winch cable had bursted. So I took my phone off and both pair of glasses and jumped (the aneroid registered 3,000 feet altitude). Unluckily my parachute ropes got tangled up on the map-board hanging outside of the basket, and the parachute did not open. I was hanging below the basket, so I had to chin myself up and crawl back in the basket. This was quite a job; the balloon was parachuting down, losing much gas and the basket swinging wildly. When I was ready—(I have just finished an egg-nog—without a kick—that the nurse was kind enough to bring me)—when I was ready to jump, a second time, the aneroid registered 1,000 feet, but I knew from the free ballooning experience that a thermometer of that kind takes some time to register the altitude accurately, and that I was probably much nearer the ground; I actually knocked on it with my forefinger and the needle jumped to about 800 feet. As it takes quite a while for a parachute to open—and I might have got tangled up again, moreover—the balloon did not seem to be coming down so awfully fast, I decided I was as safe in the basket as out. I came down on a big field. I was up 300 feet and saw two Mexican dagoes chasing their mule team that had broken loose, and also a lot of little black pigs running, scattered in all directions, scared to death. I really was chuckling, because I was not scared at all. I was coming down like in a free balloon descent, and was ready to land. I did land, but much harder than I expected to and I was knocked off my feet into the bottom of the basket. I might have fainted for a second or two. When I looked up again the basket was on its side and I crawled quickly out, expecting the basket to be dragged on the ground and the balloon to be caught in the wind; but nothing happened; all the gas was out, and had been for a long while, so they told me.

First, I just rested on my back for a couple of seconds, a little shaken up by the "impact"; then, seeing that I was not dead or dying (this is highly humorous now, but was not so much at the time), I felt my bloody nose—not broken; then my ankle, which was either broken or sprained. I thought that in either case it would swell right up, and took my legging off. Then the two farmers came running up. I told them to phone to the camp and ask for an ambulance for me. They both looked very excited, as if they had been facing a spirit, or getting the dying confession of the villain in the story; then, one ran and started grabbing the balloon in his arms, and the other ran toward the basket. I could see that they were either too bewildered or too stupid to understand. I called them back, and they helped me take my shoe and sock off.

Then a regular procession arrived—first a soldier with the mule team; then a couple of ladies almost crying from joy because I was a human being and not a corpse. A sailor, who was in the car, and the soldier carried me into the two ladies' car. Then a captain arrived in a side-car at about seventy miles per hour. And, finally, a big Air Service car came; I came back in it. A few hundred yards farther I met the end of that cheerful funeral procession; a few cars full of soldiers and the ambulance-car.

I have had already more than sixty persons in my room—from the commanding officer down—and they all looked at me as if to say: "You lucky hero, you! Three thousand six hundred feet and not a scratch!"

And I must confess I am a lucky dog. My nose and lips are a little swollen, my back a little sore from the shock, and my right ankle bruised and a little swollen; but I'll be as fit as ever next Monday, and ready to take my last flight over again.

What actually happened is that the whole balloon ripped open, and they started hauling me down at once as fa they could. The balloon spread open then collapsed, and so on all the way d —this explains my rapid fall during the 150 feet. Part of the balloon (a very s part) burned up, either due to frictio the winch cable against the bag du the time of hauling down or the actio the high-tension cables over whic dragged.

HUNTED THREE DAYS, *U*-BOAT S RENDERS TO A MERE DRIFTE

HOW completely the deadly de charges used by the Allied na shattered the morale of submarine cr is succinctly put by Alexander Hurd *The Illustrated London News*. He write

What may rank as one of the m curious incidents of the war waged on enemy submarines occurred, when a G man *U*-boat voluntarily surrendered t lightly armed British drifter. That po to a remarkable change in conditions at When the policy of piracy was first adop by the Germans their submarines things very much their own way, beca few merchant ships were armed and Navy was short of small craft. For s time the Germans were able to send to a large number of *U*-boats, and the offi and men of those vessels rather enjo the pursuit of what they regarded a sport which was then associated with li danger.

But the conditions at sea changed so months ago. Instead of being the hunt the submarines were quite as often hunted:

Not only is the number of small cr being rapidly increased, but the ingenu of the Allied navies, and conspicuously ingenuity of the British Navy, is find expression in a variety of ingenious vices. Considerable success has attenc the recent mining policy: the hydropho which enables the movements of a s merged submarine to be heard, has b successfully developed, and what described as "depth charges" are bei used with increasing results.

Recently a lightly armed British drif had an enemy submarine under gun-fi and, doubtless much to the drifter's s prize, the commanding officer of t submarine indicated that he and his co panions wished to surrender. The po tion of the British skipper was an emb rassing one. Nothing of the kind had ev occurred before—one of the most perfect developed war-ships of her particular ty surrendering to such an opponent. T captain of the drifter quickly determin that he could not refuse the surrender, b he took precautions against foul play. T particular submarine had been hunt persistently for seventy-two hours, a during that period no fewer than thirt five depth charges had been dropt near h each one producing a terrible explosio The nerve of the officers and men w thus broken.

What, it may be asked, is a dep charge? It is one of the most dead weapons employed. It consists of a ki of mine which is fitted with a hydrostat valve; as the depth charge sinks in t water the pressure increases until it sufficient to operate the valve, and th the depth charge explodes with terri effect. Of course, the valve of the dep charge can be set to practically any dep

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